THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) There are some UN Security Council Resolutions which call upon Israel to vacate occupied Arab territories. These Resolutions have not yet been implemented. Government have always impressed upon Israel to implement these UN Security Council Resolutions. Government of Israel have stated that final status of these territories is subject matter of negotiations between the parties concerned.

Pressures on Israel to withdraw from West Bank

3883. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what diplomatic pressure has been exerted on Israel Government to withdraw from the occupied land of palestine, *i.e.,* West Bank and Gaza Strip; and

(b) the role played by Government to free Yasir Arafat from the siege of Ramallah by Israeli army; and allow him to act democratically from his Headquarter at Ramallah?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Government of India have had contacts with the Israeli leadership on recent developments in West Bank & Gaza Strip. Government issued several statements reflecting nationwide concern at the serious deterioration of the security situation in the region and conveyed support to UN Security Council Resolutions 1397, 1402, 1403 & 1405. Amongst others, these Resolutions called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian areas.

(b) Arrangements have been finalized to lift the siege on President Yasir Arafat and once these arrangements have been put in place, President Yasir Arafat will be free to move. During President Arafat's siege in Ramallah, Government was concerned about his health and well-being and had declared that President Arafat represented the authority of the Palestinian people, and to subject him to this treatment is to denude the Palestinians of the sense of

their nationhood, and that this must stop. In a telephonic conversation with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres, on 1 April, Minister of External Affairs Shri Jaswant Singh had conveyed India's deep distress and told him that by virtually imprisoning President Arafat, Israel was compounding difficulties rather than lessening them, thereby making the task of peace more difficult.

Tour to neighbouring countries by ministry of external affairs

3884. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has visited China and other neighbouring countries during April, 2002;

(b) if so, the details of the meeting held by him with foreign dignitaries and the matters discussed; and

(c) whether his visit has been successful?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir. External Affairs Minister visited China, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Myanmar from March 29—April 06, 2002.

(b) China

External Affairs Minister (EAM) met Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan and Mr. Dai Bingguo, Minister, International Department of the CPC. He also called on Vice Premier Oian Qichen and Premier Zhu Rongji.

Issues discussed during the visit of EAM to China included visit of Prime Minister to China, clarification of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), bilateral dialogue mechanism on counter-terrorism, trade and economic cooperation, tourism and provision of hydrological data pertaining to the Brahmaputra river during flood season.